

CHAPTER 1

SOME PHENOMENOLOGICAL REMARKS ON PREPREDICATIVE AND PREDICATIVE IN HUSSERL

Summary

My aim is to discuss Hintikka's and Harvey's suggestion according to which we ought to "index" the direction of the phenomenological analysis in terms of a movement from the predicative level to a "rationally reconstructed" prepredicative one.

Such an assumption amounts, in my point of view, not to a mere *reformation* of the phenomenological enterprise, but much more to its radical *removal*: this assumption, as a matter of fact, carries with it the consequence that the idea of a *founding stratum* of every possible experience has no more sense; moreover, even the idea of the *immediacy of knowledge*, correlated with the former, is strongly weakened since notions as "thematic decision" or "thematic interest" are deprived of their prepredicative sense and intended as "hinge-concepts" in order to guarantee the passage from the categorial to the precategorial and conversely.

If Hintikka's and Harvey's strategy has the merit of making manifest Husserl's negligence of the importance of language, to some extent considered as a *by-product* of a more fundamental stratum, the same strategy, however, fails to appreciate the attempt made by Husserl of *entwining* receptive experience and predicative spontaneity, making use of notions such as "typical familiarity" or "precognizance".

Hintikka's and Harvey's analysis seems then suffering from an excess of *oversimplification*: but in other words, if all appears in contexts of meaningfulness, that is, of categorial formations, not all, as a matter of fact, can be reduced to a *culturally determined* experience.

1. From the prepredicative experience to the predicative judgment

In the essay “Modalization and Modalities”¹ Charles Harvey and Jaakko Hintikka attempt to evaluate Husserl’s phenomenological descriptions of the genesis of primitive logical connectives like *negation* and *disjunction*.

This essay is mainly concerned with Husserl’s analysis of *modalization* in *Experience and Judgment*: modalized forms of consciousness occur when the *doxastic certainty* that pervades our daily lives is obstructed; suspicion then infiltrates the initial certainty that, in turn, becomes modalized.

By analyzing the modalized form of negation, Husserl traces the possibility of this logical connective to a *primitive certainty* which takes the world as “the universal ground of belief pregiven for every experience of individual objects”.² Once the negation of a simple belief occurs, then a retroactive modification of the retentive stream of consciousness takes place:

...the noematic modification stems back in the form of a retroactive cancellation in the retentive sphere and modifies the production of sense stemming from earlier phases of the perception.³

As with negation, also in the case of disjunction, a background of certainty is presupposed, even if the *Urdoxic consciousness* is always pervaded by an element of possibility: the “open possibilities”, which characterize the life of intentionality, are primitive forms of *conjunction* on the ground of which disjunction or negation are possible; thereby, consciousness of possibilities is itself an *intrinsic feature* of simple certainty.

More important thing, however, is the description of how predicative modalities would emerge from prepredicative experience and the reflection on the *grounding relation* subsisting between the precategory and the categorial dimension.

Husserl states that an actual predicative judgment (an act of confirmation, for example) happens only after the challenging of an earlier simple certainty by some doubt or optionality; thereby, confirmatory judgment always has the form of “a *decision* and of taking a position with regard to what has become doubtful”.⁴

According to Hintikka and Harvey, the notion of reflective and thematic decision is an ‘hinge-concept’, as it is the notion of *prereflective interest* in the sphere of passivity, that swings us from prepredicative modalization to the domain of

predicative modal judgments. They however add that this transition, analyzed by Husserl, from the prepredicative experience to the predicative judgment is “an awkward one”:

For, in turning to descriptions of predicative judgment Husserl must use the very same predicative language that he had to use to describe the prepredicative experience. Yet, in large part at least, the domain of prepredicative experience is a sublingual domain of happenings.⁵

2. The language argument

It seems, in Harvey’s and Hintikka’s point of view, that Husserl’s understanding of higher level predicative language has been ‘smuggled back’ into the analyses of lower level prepredicative experience; this presumed lacking of clarity in Husserl’s understanding of the right relation between the above mentioned levels of the life of consciousness, is due, in their point of view, to the negligence, in Husserl’s analyses, of the *dimension of language* that would stain even the *silent stratum* of experience.

Harvey and Hintikka point out that:

The problem posed by the language argument is that (1) it is not clear how Husserl’s descriptions of the “silent stratum” of experience can *make sense* without staining that privileged stratum with the ambiguities of language; and (2), once so stained, it is not clear that this privileged stratum is or ever was ‘privileged’ by a purified transcendental quietude in direct contact with sense.⁶

Moving from Harvey’s and Hintikka’s position, the *silent layer* of experience would have not the privilege of a *full and immediate contact* with the sense; for the same reason, Derrida’s task of washing up the most important notions of phenomenology, as “presence”, “evidence”, “selfgivenness”, in the muddy flux of the living language, maintains some plausibility.⁷

At this point of analysis then, it might have some theoretical consequences to stress the point that every encounter of the world is *mediated* by culture, linguistic structures, theoretical and practical habits (*Kleidungen*) which jeopardize the task of arriving at the “immediacy” (*Unmittelbarkeit*) of the experience which, in itself, turns out to be a patient work of *balancing* its descriptive content with its

hermeneutical load due the linguistic tradition into which experience has been expressed.

Ludwig Landgrebe explicates the idea as follows:

Wenn damit ein neuer Weg der Erschliessung der unmittelbaren Erfahrung gewiesen ist, so treten in der Durchführung dieses Programms doch Schwierigkeiten auf, die zeigen, dass dieser Weg für sich allein nicht genügen kann....Aber solche reine Beschreibung bedarf der Ausdrücke, in denen das Beschriebene erfasst wird, und wenn wir auf Erlebnisweisen reflektieren, so hat eine mehr als 200jährige Tradition die zu Termini verfestigten Ausdrücke geschaffen, in denen das Erleben, das Bewusstsein und seine Weisen erfasst worden.⁸

Additionally, he states the following:

Der Weg zum Unmittelbaren der Erfahrung ist also ein Ineinander von Deskription und kritischer Prüfung der dabei zunächst naiv angewandten Termini auf ihre ursprüngliche Bedeutung hin....Nur in solchem Ineinander von Deskription und "Destruktion" kann sich die Erschliessung des Unmittelbaren der Erfahrung als eine Bewegung der Auslegung, Hermeneutik vollziehen.⁹

3. *The reverse constitution*

The proposal made by Harvey and Hintikka to overcome the theoretical perplexities tied to Husserl's conception of the relation between the precategoryal and the categorial spheres turns on the insight that any link between these two level must proceed from the predicative side:

This is because not only do higher level idealities "modify" lower level prepredicative experiences, but their retroactive effect is also one of "reverse constitution". And it is simply not clear that epoche and reduction can untangle us from the effects of such reverse constitution.¹⁰

It would be noteworthy to establish if a *reversing* of the relation subsisting between the predicative sphere and the prepredicative one, made possible by the priority assigned to the former, does justice to the fact that we live in a cultural world in which even ideal objectivities have their *full-fledged reality*.

Hintikka's and Harvey's suggestion is that we ought to "index" the direction of the phenomenological analysis as *a movement* from the predicative level to a "rationally reconstructed" prepredicative one, considering constituted idealities

not only as *clues* (as for Husserl), but also as *instruments* that “would actively lead us back to, and help us to rationally reconstruct the sphere of the prepredicative experience”.¹¹

Because of the *continuity* of the passage from one sphere to the other and of the *mutual infiltration* between the precategorical and the categorial levels of experience, the idea of a *founding stratum* of every possible experience loses sense.

Even the belief of the *immediacy of knowledge*, as a consequence of the theoretical position above proposed, is weakened, in a quasi-Sellarsian sense, insofar as notions as “thematic decision” or “thematic interest” are completely deprived of their prepredicative sense and intended as “hinge-concepts” in order to grant the passage from the categorial to the precategorical and conversely.

If we want to hold fast to the promises of phenomenology and if we want to see it as a particular philosophy of language, we ought to be compelled, following Husserl’s insight, to consider language as a *by-product* of a more fundamental stratum: in *Experience and Judgment* some aspects of linguistic acts, for example predication, are considered as founded in the pre-predicative experience *which is not formed by language*.

Husserl’s most important thesis in this work is that the exercises of the logical reason, in particular judgment and predication, would depend on a suitable experiential basis which can be analyzed *in abstraction* from the language used in the categorial dimension; then according to this point of view pre-linguistic experience would be *preorganized* into *rough types* which lay down expectations on the basis of past perceived similarities. These bundles of data are not a featureless clump, since they contain *independent pieces* and *dependent moments*: when we perceive an object, we highlight a piece or a moment of the same, while retaining the whole in *implicit grasp*: the part here is highlighted not just *per se*, but *as part* of the whole; moving back and forth our attentive grasp, we carry out an operation which is the *germ of predication*.

Husserl calls this operation “explication”: for instance, in the tree seen, I explicate its trunk (piece) or its color (moment); even if the part is taken as an object in its own right, it is considered however as a part *belonging to and emerging from* the prior whole; it results, as a matter of fact, a threefold structure: *whole, part, and*

the *part-whole* relation from which emerges the basic structure of all predication: *subject*, *attribute* and *copula*. Once explication has started, its results can be casted upon the subject and the procedure may continue: for instance, from the predicative judgment “S is p” we can move to the attributive one “S, which is p, is q”, and so on.

Through further investigation on the nature of the essential intuition, that is to say, of the method of *eidetic variation* whereby we are placed in *cognitive contact with universals*, Husserl’s philosophical enterprise, according to some critical scholars, would show its most plausible shortage for *even universals would show no trace of linguistic activity*.

Peter Simons explains the sense of Husserl’s misunderstanding of the role of language in experience with the following words:

That at least some such universals are fed us predigested by language appears not to concern Husserl. Here, as elsewhere in his philosophy of language, the social dimension of language, the fact that it is a community affair which is learnt interactively with already competent language users, and the constraints on learning imposed by this fact, are underemphasized. In part this is the result of bracketing other people and the social world, retaining for phenomenological consideration only our *sense* of these things, but for the most part he is simply not interested in anything but individual consciousness.¹²

4. The entwining of receptive experience and predicative spontaneity

What does Husserl precisely say about the above arisen questions?

In my opinion the paragraph 49 of *Experience and Judgment* dispels some above emerged doubts, since Husserl states here that, even if we ought to distinguish two levels of *interest*, and corresponding to these, two levels of *objectifying operations*: on the one hand, the *receptive experience*, on the other hand, the *predicative spontaneity*, this distinction, however, cannot be construed “as if different operations were somehow separate from each other”. Only for the sake of the analysis, the two levels are separated, even if they, as a *rule*, are actually closely *entwined*; this means that the receptive experience is not something independent, as if it were necessary first to run through a chain of receptive experiences before there could be an activation of cognition: for instance, we could at first *thematize* an object exclusively in the interest of cognition. These

few words however don't encourage us to assert that Husserl would have accepted the "reverse constitution" paradigm proposed by Harvey and Hintikka.

Husserl, in fact, explicates that:

These levels are, to be sure, always erected one upon the other; each step of the predication presupposes a step of receptive experience and explication, for only that can be originally predicated which has been originally given in an intuition, apprehended, and explicated.¹³

The same thing holds, according to Husserl, for a third and highest level, that of *conceptualizing thought* and *formation of generalities*; for every act of predicative judgment, every constitution of predicative forms includes *in se*, at the same time, a formation of generalities.

At this point of analysis, it is suitable to introduce the notions of *familiarity* and *sedimentation* that can play a role so as to defend Husserl from Hintikka's and Harvey's objections.

Just as every object of receptivity stands forth from the beginning as an object of a *type known* in some manner or other, so correlatively, says Husserl, in every predicative formation it already takes place a determination *as* this or that "on the basis of expressions inseparably entwined with every predication and on the basis of the general significations pertaining to these expressions".¹⁴

If, for instance, we make a judgment of perception of the simplest form, e.g. "S is p", determining this particular object S as green, then in this "being-determined-as-green" there is contained implicitly, by virtue of the generality of the expression "green", the relation to the general essence "green", although this relation is not made thematic as in the expression "this is a green object".

5. Typical familiarity and precognizance

The originality of an experience never implies, according to Husserl, an apprehension and an explication of an object which is completely unknown: on the contrary, the process which takes place in an original intuition is already *saturated with anticipation*:

... there is always more cointended apperceptively (*apperzeptiv mitgemeint*) than actually is given by intuition- precisely because every object is not a thing isolated in itself but is always already *an object in its horizon* of typical familiarity (*typischen Vertrautheit*) and precognizance (*Vorbekanntheit*).¹⁵

The apprehension of an object thus is never something ephemeral for, notwithstanding its progressive sinking into corresponding nonoriginal modes (retentional reverberation, empty dead past), it in no way disappears without a trace:

With regard to what has been constituted in it, it is a *possession in the form of a habitus*, ready at any time to be awakened anew by an active association.¹⁶

At every stage of the process of object constitution, there is a “precipitate” (*Niederschlag*) of cognitions *in habitus*: the object has incorporated into itself the “forms of sense” (*Sinnesgestalten*) originally constituted in the acts of explication by virtue of a knowledge that has the form of a habitus (*habituelles Wissen*).

Alfred Schuetz gives much credit to Husserl’s account of the knowledge process, maintaining that the apprehension of objects takes place always inside the frame of an unquestioned (even if questionable) belief:

They [objects] are pre-given to us in the unquestioned (although always questionable) assurance of an uncontested belief, and thus not on the ground of a particular act of positing, and still less on the ground of an existential judgment. But our experience of these given objects shows two characteristics: in the first place, all objects of our experience have from the outset the character of typical familiarity; in the second place, the process of our apperceiving these objects by originary intuition is always permeated by anticipations of not actually apperceived but cointended features.¹⁷

The *typicality* of the objects apprehensions depends on their calling forth the recollection of other objectivities similar or even like the former; on the ground of it, other objectivities of a similar kind are apperceived by “apperceptive transference” (*apperzeptive Uebertragung*), from the outset, as objectivities of the same type, of a pre-given more or less specific familiarity.¹⁸

In these few remarks there is a partial answer to the doubts engendered by Harvey and Hintikka: in some sense, in fact, every apprehension, even the most original, is *contaminated* by past acquisitions in the form of an *habitual knowledge*; if, however, we allow that a categorial moment can be contained in an intuition of an object, this does not imply that a categorial moment ought to have so much as a *foundational character*; according to the phenomenological framework, at any rate *sense precedes conceptualization*: experience is first aesthetical, and then cultural, existential (Heidegger) and so on.

6. *Secondary sensuousness*

Over against the originally generative manner of givenness of the judgment, we have, conjoined with it, a *retentional* manner of givenness: wherever an original constitution of an objectivity of consciousness takes place, the original action (a judgment, a volition and so on) changes “with retentional continuity, *into a secondary form* (eine sekundaere Form), which is no longer an activity”.¹⁹ This changing into a passive form is called “secondary sensuousness” (*sekundaere Sinnlichkeit*): a judgment thus, becomes a *preserved acquisition* (*erhaltenden Erwerb*) dependent on functionings of passivity.

The importance of the preserved acquisitions is such that, without them, judgment processes, intended as “a living further-forming and connecting of meant categorialia to make the unity of continually new judgments at higher and higher levels”²⁰ would not be possible.

The judgment formation is a complicated many-membered (*vielgliedrig*) formation which, at the end of the process, doesn’t include in its originality any of the originally generated products belonging to its various levels and members.

In paragraph 5 of *Ideas II*, Husserl, taking into consideration the *interweavings* holding among the different consciousness acts, states that it is more easy *to see* these multiform phenomenons than to *designate it*.

The error, in my opinion, committed by Harvey and Hintikka is that of *oversimplifying* the way judgments arise in consciousness and, in doing so, they would omit the right phenomenological descriptions, filling in these with notions which, in some sense, *crystallize* and *reify* the life of consciousness. For instance,

they search for clarity in their phenomenological analysis where we could expect, say, “blurred matters of fact” (*verworrenen Zustaendlichkeiten*).²¹

The mistake of *reification* made by Harvey and Hintikka in their attempt to “translate” phenomenology into possible worlds semantics is not accidental, for *modalization*, which characterizes the life of consciousness, depending on the occurring evidences, is transformed into a *logical modeling* of the noemata, so that, for example, the intentionality of consciousness is not due to its *being-directed-toward*, but rather to its *informational nature*: the meaning, for example, of a logical disjunction like “ $S_1 \vee S_2$ ”, from an analytical point of view, is not intended in the sense of a *bifurcation of beliefs*, but instead in terms of a set of models (possible worlds) in which S_1 and S_2 are true.

The limit of such approach is that while it satisfies the aims of different intensional logics, it however shows signs of cracks by trying to adequate its fundamentally *extensional method* to phenomenological instances.

Mohanty explains his ideas as follows:

As long as our interest is simply providing semantics for various sorts of intensional logics, the lack of a genuine concept of sense does not matter. But for purposes of a phenomenology which is to provide descriptive structures of acts of consciousness, including the so-called propositional attitudes, the extensional function is far too inadequate.²²

All in all, Hintikka himself recognizes some difficulties concerning his attempt to reconcile possible worlds semantics with phenomenology, for some locutions such as “possible worlds” appear very unreal if applied to the phenomenological domain:

It would be more natural to speak of different possibilities concerning our ‘actual’ world than to speak of several possible worlds. For the purpose of logical and semantical analysis, the second locution is much more appropriate than the first, however, although I admit that it sounds somewhat weird and perhaps suggests that we are dealing with something much more unfamiliar and unrealistic than we are actually doing.²³

Analysis carried on by possible world semantics then doesn’t account for a valid justification of the link between *subject* and *world* and it cannot also provide for a

justification of the continuity subsisting between the *perceptual* and the *cognitive* levels; this is a kind of critique, for example, exerted by Cobb-Stevens:

- 1) The analytic project cannot be carried through, for logical analysis cannot establish any connection between words and world;
- 2) by contrast the phenomenological project of exploring the continuity between predication and perception makes for a coherent account of the objectivity of our knowledge...²⁴

An approach as that adopted by Harvey and Hintikka has also the disadvantage of *not discriminating* enough between different contexts and different uses of e.g. the term “world” which, on its turn, may have very different meanings: from that of the *formalized world* of logic to that of the *world in which we really live* up to the *metaphysical world* of reason; only a phenomenological analysis, more particularly a transcendental logic, can resolve the problems and paradoxes resulting from the lacking of the discrimination between these different meanings. Thomas Seeböhm points out:

Thus the paradoxes which are connected with the attempts to connect the different concepts of ‘world’ vanish. Quite another problem occurs which is a result of the separation. How can the explication of modal operators and other operators- as well as some intensional relations by means of this abstract apparatus- have objective validity for the explication of some categorical forms used in ordinary talk about the real world in which we live. Here we have a question about ‘objective validity’ which belongs to transcendental logic.²⁵

7. “*Kenntnis*” and “*Erkenntnis*”

Another mistake, in my opinion, made by Hintikka and Harvey consists of leaving out the important phenomenological difference between “*Kenntnis*” and “*Erkenntnis*”: even if “*Kenntnis*” is objectively directed, it is not yet “*Erkenntnis*” in the sense of predicative knowledge; Husserl distinguishes between “*Vorformen der Erkenntnis*” and “*Vollformen der Erkenntnis*”, so that omitting this difference, we would have already at the prepredicative level all the conceptual determinations of the categorial level.

We ought to separate then prepredicative experience (*Kenntnis*) from knowledge (*Erkenntnis*) on the basis of the following aspects:

- 1) der modus of “availability” (*Verfuegbarkeit*) which can be splitted into “habitual acquisition” (*habituellem Besitz*) and “available acquisition” (*verfuegbarer Besitz*);
- 2) the different *interests* presented respectively in the prepredicative and the predicative levels;
- 3) the different *objects* contained in these two levels of activity;
- 4) the different degrees (*Stufen*) of activity performed by the two levels;
- 5) the importance of the notion of “mediation” (*Mittelbarkeit*) intended as a watershed between precategory and category life of consciousness.

The aspects which distinguish the prepredicative experience from knowledge are presented by Dieter Lohmar in his essay *Erfahrung und kategoriales Denken. Hume, Kant und Husserl ueber vorpraedikative Erfahrung und praedikative Erkenntnis*²⁶ with the following words:

Wir werden in der Folge sehen, dass sich vorpraedikative Erfahrung und Erkenntnis (1) in der Hinsicht auf den Modus der Verfuegbarkeit (*habituellem Besitz-verfuegbarer Besitz*), (2) im Hinblick auf das in den jeweiligen Akten lebendige Interesse, (3) durch ihren Gegenstand, (4) durch die Stufe der Aktivitaet in den notwendigen Konstitutionsschritten und (5) durch ihre gegebene oder nicht gegebene Mittelbarkeit.²⁷

As regards (1), we may add that *habitual knowledge* (in the sense of “Kenntnis”) is certainly a *lasting acquisition*, but not something that is available (*verfuegbar*) to us every time; on the contrary, an acquisition of the predicative sphere is available *for ever*: the judgment here holds *for ever* because, at the basis of a lasting available acquisition, there is a *modification of the will*: here “still holding” means “still willing”.

This intervention of the will is what discriminates the interest which pervades the prepredicative level from that present in the category level: in the predicative sphere in fact there is a *willing participation* of the Ego at play: all determinations of the objects of consciousness are maintained (*festgehalten*) for ever (*ein fuer allemal*), that is, holding for all the subjects:

We return to what is reproduced as to an *acquisition*, actively produced in an act of will oriented toward this acquisition. As such, it is intentionally characterized. It is reproduced otherwise than in

a mere memory: *a modification of the will* is present, as with every acquisition (*Erwerb*). This gives it the character, not only of something which has been voluntarily apprehended earlier, but of an acquisition which still continues to be valid, which we still hold in our will, not now simply repeating the act of will, but willing in the form of reproduction, which is that of the 'still': I, present ego, as belonging to the particular mode of the present, am *still willing*... Thus *cognition as action is an activity with an aim*, an activity directed toward the possessive apprehension of true being and being-such of an object, its determinative characteristics, in the corresponding states of affairs.²⁸

In the predicative dimension of consciousness therefore to judge is a question of *decision-making*, that is, of appropriation "through which the active, strivingly active Ego appropriates to itself an acquisition, that is, an abiding knowledge".²⁹ According to Husserl thus the abiding validity of a categorical acquisition is an "active acceptance", a "declaring-something-as-valid".

When I posit something as valid in an affirmative and judicative manner, I mean by this that it is settled for me from now on, as established for the future, and in particular, as being in this way or that. If we were to stand already within the sphere of expressive, predicative judging and in the sphere of communication, then the accomplishment of judgment would be articulated most acutely with the phrase, "I ascertain," or also "I assert that." But we must observe- and this belongs to the essence of judgment- that we do not already find the communicative relation in judgment's first originality; as a rule the communicative relation is presented along with the expression, the assertion.³⁰

As regards (5), we note that the availability of the predicative acquisition is accomplished in the *dimension of language*: objective knowledge otherwise than prepredicative experience is possible only if the apprehended is communicated (*mitgeteilt*); the fixation of the meaning of a judgment in a verbal expression (*Ausdruck*) gives it an holding intersubjective validity.

The linguistic expression of predicative acquisitions, even if it occurs through "indications" at first empty, can lead to *envisionment* by presentification or by renewed self-giving of the identical.

In Husserl's point of view, in the predicative sphere are constituted new kinds of objects which can be made thematic as logical structures and are called *categorical objectivities* or *objectivities of the understanding*.³¹

Thus, cognition, as a higher activity, can be seen, in contrast to receptivity, as “creative spontaneity” (*erzeugende Spontaneität*), in itself productive of objects; this, however, does not amount to recognize the cognition of the power of producing freely, without constraints, categorial objects. We might distinguish, as a matter of fact, between “herstellen” and “erzeugen” which are different activities of production: the “erzeugen” of the creative spontaneity has nothing to do with the “herstellen” by virtue of which we, as for a blacksmith, predelineate the result of the productive operation, projecting willingly into the future the determinations of the object we want to make.

At this point of the analysis, a term like “creative” means rather “a production of the knowledge of a self-given object”; what is in question here is, as it were, the realization of a tendency toward *self-givenness*; the ego lives in the activity of objectivation, even if “the striving of cognition, however, has its analogies with desirous striving”.

This position concerning the meaning of the expression “creative spontaneity” is also shared by Dieter Lohmar who states:

Diese ‘Erzeugung’ ist aber nicht als ein ‘Herstellen’ zu verstehen, bei dem wir das Ergebnis willentlich projektieren oder sogar erzwingen koennten. Es handelt sich auch nicht- wie der Kontext nahelegen koennte- um eine freie Schoepfung (‘Erzeugen’) von Verstandesgegenstaendlichkeiten selbst, sondern um ‘eine Erzeugung der Erkenntnis von einem selbstgegeben Gegenstand’.³²

Prepredicative experience and predicative formations are, in the point of view of a *genetic analysis*, different, for they perform different genetic steps; this does not mean that they *de facto* are separate from each other:

...this distinction of levels should not be construed as if the different operations were somehow separate from each other. On the contrary, things which must be treated separately for the sake of analysis and which, genetically, are recognized as belonging to different levels of objectification are *as a rule actually closely entwined*.³³

What does the term “entwined” properly means? Does the use of this term bring Husserl’s idea about the prepredicative and the predicative formations nearer to that of Harvey and Hintikka based on the notion of “reverse constitution”?

Regarding this question, Husserl has a clear opinion: it is certainly true that it is not always necessary first to run through a chain of receptive experiences before there could be an awakening of a categorial activity; we can, from the first, thematize a pregiven object only in the interest of cognition: in this case, predicative forming goes hand in hand with receptive apprehension; but all this does not mean that the foundation relation can be inverted:

Each step of the predication presupposes a step of receptive experience and explication, for only that can be originally predicated which has been originally given in an intuition, apprehended, and explicated³⁴.

8. *Practical vs. theoretical*

The view shared by Hintikka and Harvey, in my opinion, lays two important theoretical deficiencies before us: the first, *particular*, concerning with possible world semantics, the second, on the other hand, *more general*, involving the sense of the phenomenological enterprise.

According to Harvey and Hintikka, there would be, *prima facie*, a “philosophical discontinuity” between phenomenology and possible worlds semantics: for instance, the meaning of a disjunction ($S_1 \vee S_2$), in possible worlds semantics, is not explicated in terms of a *bifurcation of beliefs*, but in terms of the *theoretical sets of models* (possible worlds) in which S_1 and S_2 respectively are true:

What has taken place in the systematic logical theory of our century is not a modalization in Husserl's sense, but a modalization.³⁵

Notwithstanding this dissimilarity, they however argue that, rightly understood, the two approaches “complement” rather than contradict each other: they, as a matter of fact, would approach the same subject-matter even if from different directions. It is nevertheless a hard task to see *how* the two approaches would complement each other and *in which sense* they would concern the same

argument: *passivity* (modalization) and *activity* (modalities) involve an analysis of different consciousness fields which cannot anyway run in parallel; they entail, as a matter of fact, different forms of *temporalization* and apply to different kinds of objects (or “quasi-objects” in case of prepredicative apprehensions). For instance, for the *substantivation* in which the state of affairs is educed from a judgment “there is nothing analogous at the lower level”.³⁶

It is certainly true that looking at possible worlds semantics from a phenomenological point of view has the advantage of treating worlds only as “motivated worlds”; for the same reason, the notion of possibility itself needs to be reviewed in favor of *motivated possibilities*, that is to say, possibilities tied to fundamental *background beliefs* which predelineate the properties of the objects taken into consideration.

In contrast with Harvey's and Hintikka's view, however, it is hard to think that the shift from motivated possibilities to logical one is so plain as supposed by the two scholars.

Possible worlds semantics would *disengage* the possibilities it deals with from their constitutive sources, operating with *reified or pure possibilities*; therefore, possible worlds semantics runs the risk of being burdened with “the naïveté of an ontological discourse”³⁷.

Moreover, in assuming that a possible worlds semantics ought to be tied to a “world home” with a “principle of production” lodged within that world, that is, by *anchoring* the principle of production of possibilities to a *cognizing subject*, it is very easy to make this approach unrecognizable.

“Indexing” the key notions of possible worlds semantics with some, as it were, precategorical findings of the genetic phenomenology would amount, in my point of opinion, not to a complement operation, but to the recognition of their reciprocal impossibility to be reconciled.

Harvey and Hintikka take Mohanty's remarks on a phenomenological account of “possibility”³⁸ into serious consideration, but they would neglect the more important point of it: if we support a phenomenological point of view, we cannot give up an essential distinction concerning with the notion of possibility:

It is of importance that we elaborate in an exemplary fashion the contrast emerging here between possibility in the sense of merely “logical possibility”, mere possibility in the sense of merely “logical” possibility, mere possibility on the basis of intuitive representation, and practical possibility as the to-be-able-to.³⁹

In Husserl’s point of view, logical and practical possibilities derive both from a *neutrality modification*: the former from a neutrality modification of intuitive representation, the latter from a neutrality modification of acting into a *quasi-acting*⁴⁰. If we accept the primal of practical over against the theoretical, then we can construe the empty horizons belonging to any experience as a system of possibilities for practical intervention; all doxic-logical possibilities can be reduced, at least, to the practical “I can phantasize”.⁴¹

9. Husserl’s conception of history

The remarks made above have also some consequences on the interpretation of Husserl’s conception of *history*; he, in fact, would not countenance the view according to which every historical age and every world opening represent an *instantiation* of the truth: the outcome of such a thesis would be, as a matter of fact, that only inside an historical period we can decide what is true or what is not true. If for Heidegger, as a matter of fact, there is not an absolute truth valid for everyone⁴², but only *points of view* on which we are tuned (*bestimmt*) by virtue of our historical existence (*Dasein*), for Husserl, on the contrary, historical world is not all: the idea of truth doesn’t dissolve into the *variety* of the historical worlds; the latter are therefore referred intentionally to the idea of truth, that is, to a *unique world*.

Western culture, according to his view, results in an infinite difference between *representation* and *truth*; from this point of view, Husserl’s analysis of perception gives us not a theory of meaning, but a *theory of reference*.

The world then is the *transcendental condition* of the appearing of the things, of the actions and of the meanings: every judgment, that is, every categorial production is grounded on it; the *conditions of asseribility* (language, culture, norms, values and the like) presuppose the *conditions of manifestability*.⁴³

The world, in this view, is a *transcendental a priori* and as such the condition of possibility of every categorial or predicative acquisition:

The world is pregiven to us, the waking, always somehow practically interested subjects, not occasionally but always and necessarily as the universal field of all actual and possible praxis, as horizon. To live is always to live-in-certainty-of-the-world. Waking life is being awake to the world, being constantly and directly “conscious” of the world and of oneself as living in the world, actually experiencing [*erleben*] and actually effecting the ontic certainty of the world.⁴⁴

If we neglect this theoretical and grounding position, we may run the risk of not understanding the core of phenomenology: a misunderstanding mistake into which Harvey and Hintikka would fall.

If all appears in *contexts* of meaningfulness, of categorial formations, not all can be reduced to a see *culturally determined*; this remark, however, does not mean that the constitution of the sensible field of the pregiven, the prepredicative level, is to be intended as an absolutely determined layer on which, in a second moment, we can add, without reciprocal influences, the high-order level, the categorial one: if this position were Husserl’s last word on the relation between the precategorial and the categorial level, we could not fulfill the possibility of passing from the world in its perceptual purity to the world in its practical (existential, aesthetical, historical) meaningfulness.

In *Ms. K III 6*, Husserl warns against the mistake of intending the relation between the world of representation and the world of the practical life as a founding relation which goes, in temporal succession, from the lower stock to the higher stock of experience:

Die Vorstellungswelt, die ich als Unterschichte der praktischen Welt beschreibe, so gar nicht als Unterschichte in der die praktische Subjektivität zunaechst ausser Spiel bleibt, beschrieben werden kann.⁴⁵